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## **Media-Educational Habitus of Future Educators in the Context of Education in Day-Care Centers**

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### **Abstract**

This research explores these questions: (1) How are the forms of media-educational habitus of future educators shaped? (2) What conditions influence whether or not media education is done in day-care centers? The qualitative study consists of six semi-structured interviews with media education teachers in educator training, four focus group discussions with future educators in the second year of their courses and four group discussions with future educators in their third year. Data reveals two different forms of habitus: 'The day-care center as shelter against 'bad' electronic media' (type I) and 'media education and the inclusion of electronic media as parts of the day-care center' (type II). These beliefs and attitudes will be a factor in the continuing integration of media education instructional practices in German day-care centers.

**Keywords:** *day-care center; preschool, education; media education; habitus, Germany*

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The appropriate use of media and technology in preschool education is of growing interest in Europe. Following the debate about the results of the PISA surveys, official educational manuals ("Bildungspläne") have been designed for every German state (cf. Wildgruber and Becker-Stoll 2011, 61). These manuals describe the educational tasks either of day-care centers (where the age-range of the children is from zero to six years) or of both day-care centers and primary schools. The aim of their implementation is to enhance the quality of education in those educational institutions by defining the criteria for their educational work (cf. Mienert 2007, 3). The Bildungspläne stipulate the range of educational tasks, which the educators must include in their educational activities. One of the educational tasks mentioned in the Bildungspläne relates to media. Often media is not named separately, but is combined with other educational tasks like the promotion of language skills (cf. Meister 2012; Friedrichs and Meister 2014). In the Bildungsplan of North Rhine-Westphalia an increased use of media in the curriculum and media education are combined as one of the ten educational tasks that educators should incorporate into their work. The other educational elements specified for day-care centers are: motor development; body, health and food; language and communication; social, cultural and intercultural education; artistic and aesthetic education; religion and ethics; mathematical education; scientific and technical education and ecological education (cf. MSW NRW and MFKJKS 2010).

Media education is also included in educator training (cf. MSW NRW 2013). The establishment of the use of media and of media education in the Bildungspläne and in training scheme schedules can be regarded as part of the response to the debate around the quality and the professionalization of early childhood education (cf. Bergs-Winkel 2010, 18; Smidt and Schmidt 2012, 244; Wildgruber and Becker-Stoll 2010). Given its being fixed in the Bildungspläne and the training scheme schedules, one might conclude that media education is regarded as highly significant in day-care centers, is much practiced there and is perceived as an important task by educators at the centers.

But research results reveal a different picture. Media education is rarely practiced in day-care centers, which means that reflecting with children on their media preferences and doing practical activities such as producing a video or a digital picture book are seldom integral parts of their educational work (cf. Meister et al. 2012, 23). The reasons given by educators are mainly structural problems of the working context, for example a lack of time and of media devices in the day-care center. Other, and perhaps more significant reasons are as follows: a perception that media education is less important than the other tasks of day-care center; a negative attitude towards using media in the day-care center; low levels of self-confidence on the part of educators in their own media and media-education literacy (cf. Six and Gimmler 2007; Meister et al. 2012; Brüggemann et al. 2013; Friedrichs and Meister 2014; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2015); and a misunderstanding of the equality of significance between media education and the use of media (cf. Six and Gimmler 2007).<sup>1</sup>

Recent studies have focused on those educators who are currently working in day-care centers and did not consider those who are still in training. But it seems important to gain knowledge about the attitudes of this latter group towards media and media education because it is these people who will probably be working for a long time in day-care centers where they could do media education. Given the relative youth of these future educators (around 20 to 25 years), one might assume that they use as much media as other persons in their (late) youth time (cf. van Eimeren and Frees 2014). The qualitative study of the author presented in this paper takes a look at this group. The leading research questions of the study were: (1) How are the forms of media-educational habitus of future educators shaped? (2) What conditions influence whether or not media education is done in day-care centers?

In the next two sections the concept of media education and the concept of media-educational habitus will be discussed. This will be followed by a description and analysis of the methods adopted and then the presentation of the research results. The paper ends with a conclusion regarding the incorporation of media education in the work of day-care centers and comments on the remaining gaps in the research.

## Media Education in Germany

Media education includes all activities and ideas in educational contexts which have the aim of developing media literacy (cf. Tulodziecki 2008). This is in the German debate often described as "Medienkompetenz." Medienkompetenz consists of four dimensions: the capacity for a critical view of media and media developments, knowledge about media devices and the media market, the ability to use media both in a receptive and in an interactive manner (e.g., a conversation via the Internet) and the ability to engage in media production (e.g., producing a film) (c.f. Baacke 1997). Via the promotion of media literacy, children shall on the one hand become protected against the negative effects of media (e.g., manipulation by advertising) and on the other hand learn to make the most of the possibilities offered by media (e.g., the use of a computer as a tool for painting, writing, etc.). Media education for children in the day-care center has a number of elements, the first of which aims to reflect their experiences with media. An example of this might be painting preferred media figures, along with a discussion of why the children like the specific media figure so much. Thus, the children feel valued and the educators gain insight into significant topics of the children. The second major element is engaging the children with the handling of media devices (e.g., via first experiences with the computer); later there can be action-oriented projects in which children produce their own media content (e.g., an audio drama, a video or photographic story). Through activities like these children learn that media content is made by others and shows a specific reality, for example by using special film effects like stop motion (cf. Eder and Roboom 2014).

<sup>1</sup> US research found similar barriers to media education in schools (cf. Smith 2014: 97; Hobbs 2013).

## Media Educational Habitus as the Overlap of Media-Related Habitus and Professional Habitus

Bourdieu describes *habitus* as a system of consistent and transferable dispositions, structures which are the basis for generating and organizing practices and ideas (cf. Bourdieu 1993, 98). On the one hand, the habitus is “structured structure” (Bourdieu 2010, 166), shaped by one’s position in the social structure. On the other hand, it is “structuring structure” (*ibid.* 166) because the habitus acts as “modus operandi” (*ibid.* 168), as a “generative formula” (*ibid.* 166) for all kind of practices.

The theory of media-related habitus has been a part of the debate in the social sciences and media education for several years, having been brought it into the scientific discourse by Swertz (2003), who refers to Mc Luhan (cf. Swertz 2012), and Kommer (2006, 2010). In the theory of media-related habitus Bourdieu’s theory of habitus is specifically applied to media. According to Kommer und Biermann (2012) the media-related habitus is a system of consistent media-related dispositions that are the basis for the generation of and the structuring of media-related practices, ideas and attributions regarding media and media use. These practices, ideas and attributions are acquired through the process of localization within the social space and the structural link to the ontogeny influenced by the media and social environment (cf. Kommer and Biermann 2012, 90). The media-related habitus of a person is reflected both in their specific way of using media (cf. Swertz 2012, 56) and in their communications about the contents of media. By analyzing a person’s media usage and communication about it, their preferences and “meaning-giving perceptions” (Bourdieu 2010, 166) about media can be reconstructed.

The media-educational habitus is a specification of Bourdieu’s theory referring to media education. In this paper, I define the media-educational habitus as a system of consistent media-educational dispositions that are the basis for the generation of and the structuring of media-educational practices and of ideas and attributions regarding media education. In this paper, I define the educational attitude of future educators as their professional habitus.<sup>2</sup> In the research process, I found that the professional habitus of future educators, including their perceptions of their responsibilities as educators and of childhood and children, limit their media-educational ideas, attributions and practices.

The media-educational habitus can be defined as being the overlap between the media-related and the professional habitus because of the limiting influence of the media-related and professional habitus in regard to the media-educational habitus (see Figure 1). For example, if a future media educator believes that a computer should generally only be used by one person, including one child (media-related habitus), and an educational aim of this specific educator is to encourage appropriate social behavior in the children (professional habitus), the educator will probably not allow children to work together on a computer (media-educational habitus) (cf. Friedrichs 2013). Media-related, professional and media-educational habitus are defined as parts of the whole habitus of a person (cf. Krais and Gebauer 2002, 75; cf. Kommer 2013, 11).

## Research Methods

Recent studies of media education in day-care centers have focused exclusively on the attitudes to media education and media use of educators who are currently working in day-care centers (cf. Six and Gimmler 2007; Meister et al. 2012; Brüggemann et al. 2013; Friedrichs and Meister 2014; Borstel 2014; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2015). It is because trainee educators have not so far been considered that the present

<sup>2</sup> This term is a translation of the German word ‘berufsethisch’ (cf. Friedrichs 2013). The use of the term professional habitus does not refer to Oevermann which uses the German term ‘professioneller Habitus’ in a normative way regarding a high quality of educational work (cf. Oevermann 1996; Oevermann 2001).

author does so with this qualitative study. The research questions are: (1) How are the forms of media-educational habitus of future educators shaped? (2) What conditions influence whether or not media education is done in day-care centers?

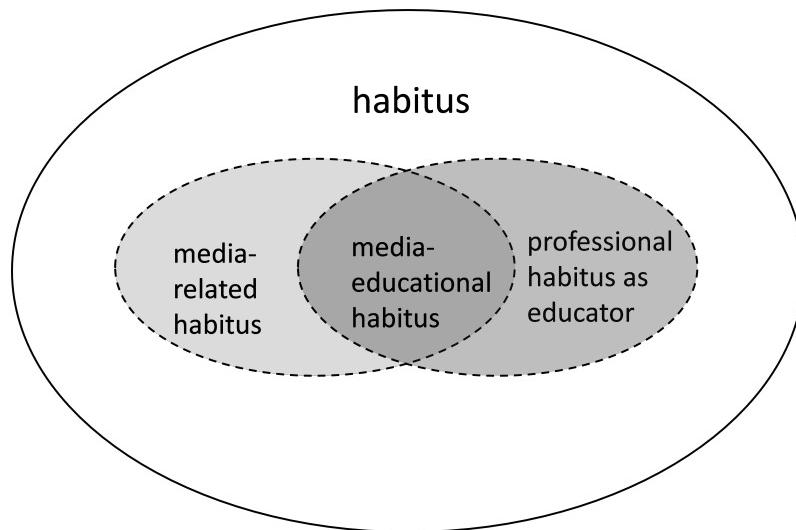


Figure 1: Media-educational habitus as the overlap between media-related and professional habitus

The data was collected in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany from September 2011 to June 2012. The study consists of three research strands: semi-structured interviews with media education teachers in educator training ( $N=6$ ; 4 females, 2 males), four focus group discussions with trainee educators in their second year ( $N=24$ ; 21 females, 3 males) and four focus group discussions with trainee educators ( $N=9$ ; 8 females, 1 male) in their third year of courses. The third year students are doing one year of professional practical training in a particular educational institution (day-care center or open day care for pupils of primary school). They have, therefore, much more practical educational experience than the second year students, who only have 16 weeks of practical educational experience, spread over a number of internships. The teachers have been included in the sample in order to provide information about the media-educational content of educator training and to contribute a certain validation to the answers in the focus group discussions.

To stimulate the members of the groups to conduct the discussions without the researcher's influence, who took a passive role, and to ensure that all the topics relevant to the research questions were discussed, file cards were used containing normative statements like: "Computers are needed for the children in the day-care center" or "Children use too much media at home, the parents do not monitor their media use—therefore media education in the day-care center is useless." The rationale behind this method is that it makes the future educators form their opinions about media education in the day-care center.

Interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed by using the documentary method (cf. Nohl 2009; Bohnsack et al. 2010), which is an appropriate method of analysis for reconstructing the habitus of a person or of a group. The habitus ("framework of orientation") (Bohnack 2010, 103) needs to be reconstructed because its development is "internalized" (Bourdieu 2010, 166), so the person is unconscious or only partly conscious of it (cf. Bourdieu 2010, 165). The analysis consists of three steps, as follows: "Formulating interpretation" involves a close examination of what the participants say; "Reflecting interpretation" involves an analysis of how something is said, e.g., taking note of repeated and contradictory statements, in order to reconstruct the different "frameworks of orientation,"—it includes a comparative analysis; and "typification" of the focus group discussions requires the researcher to abstract the frameworks of orientation of every group to identify

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Table 1

*Key areas of analysis*

### **Media-Related Habitus**

- "If they have been in front of the TV for the whole weekend, you notice it."
- "They were restless."
- "They were not physically challenged."
- "The parents who have a job take their kids out on the weekend and the parents who do not work are sitting in front of the TV at the weekend. With their kids."
- "I think about my media usage: How often do I use which media device? That has increased. I also think: Okay, the TV is already on again and I am sitting in front of the computer and I am listening to music and I am writing on Facebook. That different media come together."

### **Media Education Habitus**

- "I definitely do not want a computer in the day-care center... Of course, we are in the 21st century and media play an important role in education and especially with regard to children. But I think the children in the day-care center should still be held back a bit."
- "It makes sense and it is possible to do a photography project. The costs are problematical. In our day-care center there is the question, "How can we print the photos?" and then the expenses for printing and things like that...And also the time. We are oriented to the children's needs but there is not always enough time to say, "Okay, I'll go with five kids into another room or outside and take some photos."
- "I have done a photography project. It was a group with children under three years. Thus, I had to help the kids a bit, but they could mainly manage it. [...] We have put the children on paper on the ground, have drawn their body contours and then the children made photos of the parts of their bodies and then they matched the photos and their body silhouette."

### **Professional Habitus**

- "For me, other things like motor development of creative working, children's play and things like this are the main things and I would integrate media in those areas. And I would not treat it as a main topic of my educational work."
- "At the beginning nearly everybody was against [the use of media in day-care center]."
- "Against it and thought that it is not appropriate to use a learning laptop in day-care center. And then over the time we have got more open-minded and now I am open to the topic, I just think a computer should not be used."

### **Media-Related Conditions Related to Future Educators**

- "The TV is always on. I live alone and the first thing I do [after work] is to switch the TV on. I do not watch, but I have to hear something."
- "I could show the children how to use a computer and how to make photos. But I could handle a video production or something that that."
- "I would not dare to do [a video project with children.] Because although I think I have the theoretical knowledge, I have no experience of doing it with children."

### **External Structural Conditions**

- "The educators in the day-care centers are overstrained...They have so many things to do... like these ten educational tasks. There are too many tasks and then they must also integrate media?"
- "We had a role-play of a parents evening...[The message was] that you do not stand in the front and just tell them things...But you can also use media...if you want. This experience was very interesting for me."

### **Working Context of the Day-Care Centers**

- "The media devices that are used in my day-care center are mainly books, audio dramas and CDs. I have also worked in a day-care center where the children were allowed to use a computer at specific times."
- "There is hardly any time [to do a media education project]"

From transcripts of interviews and group discussions

broad types of habitus (What framework of orientations can be found in the different groups?) (cf. Bohnsack 2010). To illustrate the analysis method, Table 1 represents the key areas of analysis. Additionally, each key area is represented by a significant quote of the future educators in the focus group discussions.

## Results

*Media Usage of the Future Educators.* In their leisure time the participants use a lot of electronic media. Media are highly integrated in their daily life. They mostly use a computer (for Facebook and training tasks), a mobile phone/smartphone and television. Furthermore, they listen to a lot of music. Media are often used for entertainment, but only a few of the participants use them to follow news (e.g., reading newspapers or watching the news). Although the future educators see a lot of risks in media use by children, most of them do not see risks for themselves. Or if they see them, they ignore them and use Facebook for example although they know that the social network collects personal data. The future educators estimate their own media literacy and media-educational literacy differently. Some of them feel insecure and unable to do a bigger media education project (e.g. a video project) on its own without support:

I would not dare to do [a video project with children]. Because although I think I have theoretical knowledge, I have no experience of doing it with children. I just have the experience I gain through the training. And I just do not know how to do it with children. Because theory and practice are very different. (Sebastian, 23 years old)

*Perceived Responsibilities of the Day-Care Center.* All the future educators in the sample state that society is mediatized and that children's usage of electronic media, especially watching television, is very high. Linked to this they see different risks and negative effects for children's development and behavior. Although all participants perceive that nowadays childhood can be described as media childhood (*media-related habitus*), the perceived responsibility of a day-care center with regard to media education and the integration of electronic media in their work differs among the participants. The analysis of the focus group discussions reveals two different types of media-educational habitus: the day-care center as shelter against 'bad' electronic media (Type I) and media education and the inclusion of electronic media as parts of the day-care center' (Type II) (see figure 2).

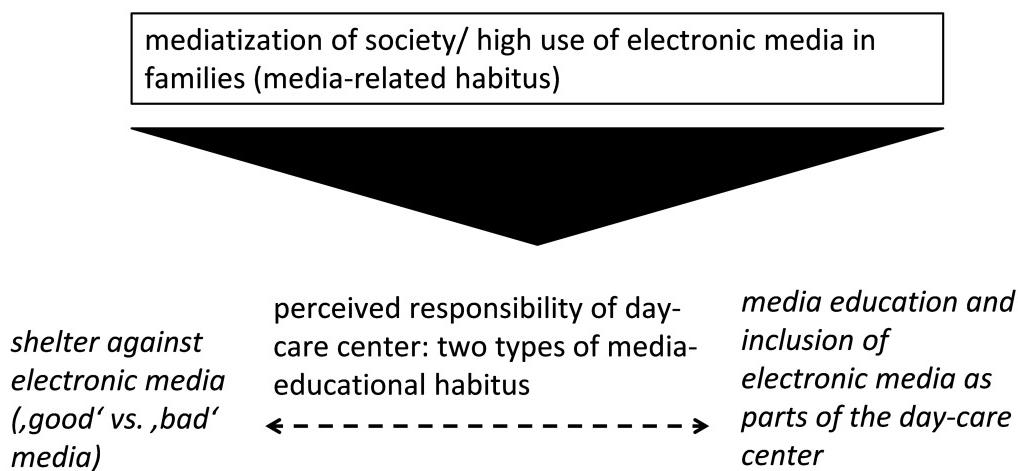


Figure 2: Two types of media-educational habitus

*Type I: The Day-Care Center as Shelter Against ‘Bad’ Electronic Media.* Most of the future educators see a responsibility on the part of the day-care center to reject the use of “bad” electronic media like televisions and computers in educational work. The day-care center should be a shelter against bad media, containing none of them, because high levels of use of media by the children would lead to aggression and restlessness in the children. The participants say that they especially observe this effect on Mondays at the day-care center (in Germany it’s called “Monday syndrome”) because many of the children would spend the weekends in front of the television and would do not do other activities requiring physical effort. Future educators with this type of habitus emphasize the risks of those media for children and see almost no opportunities. By not having bad media in the day-care center, the risks posed by those media could be kept away from the children while they are in the institution.

In making assumptions about the quality of specific media content for children, the participants reflect their own media childhood experiences. Whereas the future educators appreciate the media that they used in their own childhood (e.g., educational TV and radio dramas), they are very critical of most of today’s media content for children (e.g., fast-moving cartoons). This phenomenon can also be found in relation to experiences of being in nature and playing with friends. In other words, the future educators romanticize their own childhood, as in this exchange among participants in third year of training:

And when I was nine or ten years old I was allowed, from time to time, when my Mum used the computer, to play card games or something similar on the computer. It was allowed sometimes when I asked, ‘Can I play?’, then could. But I didn’t have such a strong inner need for it. When I saw what she was doing, then I needed it, but I would never have asked if she hadn’t been using the computer. I much preferred to be outside with my friends. (Anna, 22 years old)

Yes. (Mark, 23 years old)

I played there in the forest, around the stream, in meadows (quiet smile), everything. But nowadays everything has changed a bit. (Anna)

Associating the introduction of a computer into the day-care center with their perception of a high usage of video games in the daily family setting and the perceived risks of media usage for children (e.g., the reduced ability to differentiate between virtual and actual reality), those two participants tend to reject it. Furthermore, their rejection of a computer for use in the day-care center can be explained by their judgment that before using a computer, children need a level of cognitive development that younger children would not yet have reached. Thus, as described above, the media-related habitus of the future educators—their ideas and attributions about the opportunities and the risks of media for children—limits their media-educational habitus.

Another focus group discussion with second year future educators also shows the refusal to contemplate bad media in the day-care center. One female participant is against the use of a computer in day-care center because children were “too young” and they should “learn those basic social competences before using media” (professional habitus). She does not identify the potential for a collaborative use of the computer by children to raise social competencies. From her point of view, the computer is risky, an “additional” and overstraining “stimulus” for children’s senses (media-related habitus). This participant perceives the impact of a computer for society and education, but refuses to bring this media into the work of the day-care center:

I definitely do not want a computer in the day-care center. [...] Of course we are in the 21st century and media play an important role, in education and especially for children. But I think the children in the day-care center should still be held back a bit. (Isabelle, 22 years old)

Whereas future educators with this type of media-educational habitus reject having “bad” electronic media in day-care center, they favor the use of media which they regard as useful for children (“good media”). These good media comprise books, audio dramas for children and a digital camera which the participants associate with positive effects for children’s development like the promotion of children’s learning and creativity. For example, they believe doing a photo project with children makes sense, but most of them have not yet done such a project.

*Type II: The Inclusion of Electronic Media as Part of the Day-Care Center.* Contrary to the participants of Type I, a minority of the participants regard media education and the use of electronic media (e.g., of a computer) as tasks appropriate to the day-care center because electronic media is and will increasingly be highly integrated in everyone’s daily life. The mediatization and digitalization of society will make it impossible to refuse to deal with new media and how to handle it. Referring to this, participants of this type recommend the use of a computer in the day-care center:

[...] the children are interested in it (Pinar, 22 years: Yes.). These are children’s experiences, every child [...] connects with it. And therefore it is important not to exclude it from day-care center.  
(Friederike, 37 years old)

As preparation for school and daily life, children would need media literacy and the ability to handle a computer. The group argues by using examples, e.g., buying tickets for a bus via the Internet. The participants of this type of habitus see both the opportunities and the risks of media for children. They also believe that, although there are negative effects from a too intensive consumption of TV—like the Monday syndrome—the day-care center should not be like a shelter against digital media. Thus one of the participants of the group quoted above says that media usage belongs to “our time and therefore it is important” to integrate media with the work of the day-care center. Examples of what this group points out as opportunities offered by media in the day-care center include children doing research via Google and children without home access to computers getting first experiences with it.

*Assignment of Groups to Corresponding Types.* Looking at the division of the two types of media-educational habitus in the sample, three groups can be assumed to Type II (media education and the inclusion of electronic media as parts of the day-care center). But only some participants think that a computer should be used with children in day-care center. Although the participants of the two other groups regard media education and the integration of electronic media in day-care center as necessary because of the high relevance of media in children’s daily life, they nevertheless remain skeptical about the use of the computer. For example, one of those groups refuses to let the children use a painting program on the PC because, among other things, children would still have to learn to paint and the computer is seen as hindering this. The other groups belong to Type I (the day-care center as shelter against bad electronic media), although there are some participants in these groups who argue the contrary view, seeing opportunities for the use of electronic media like a computer.

*Ideas and Attributions Regarding Media Education.* The participants have only a little media-educational experience. One exception is a male trainee who took part in a video project with children in a day-care center during a one-year internship before starting his course. In this project the trainees filmed the children, who were playing particular roles from a story that they had been reading.

The future educators’ lack of experience is reflected in their knowledge and their ideas and attributions concerning media education. For example, not all of them, when reflecting about media education, have ever thought about doing a photography project with children.<sup>3</sup> The finding that many future educators have little

<sup>3</sup> This is what the future educators told me in the group discussions after watching a video about such a project. The video was intended to stimulate the discussion and to ensure that all of the participants have a common basis of knowledge about media education (e.g., that the participants know that media education is (also) about the integration of electronic media into their work).

knowledge about media education is also validated by an interview with a teacher who states that the future educators would have no idea of how to transfer the theory of media education into practical experiences:

It is very difficult for them [...] to think about the media that they use daily for themselves in a self-evident manner in a simple way. That they feel: This has educational value. And I think they do not really know: What do we want to teach the children? And how you can do it?" (Nele Bensch, 36 years old)

Furthermore, the teachers say in the interviews that the future educators would often focus on producing a professional media product with children which would lead to the attribution that media education is complex and needs a lot of time, factors that seem likely to hinder doing media education in day-care centers.

*Media Experiences of Children Are Reflected in Their Behavior in the Day-Care Center.* One topic that was discussed in different group discussions is media-related role-play by boys who bring in merchandise like collector cards (in both cases, especially *Star Wars*) or Matchbox cars connected with the animated children's movie *Cars*. Both the participants and their team in the day-care center reject these kinds of role-play because the boys would play fighting scenes and would act aggressively, scaring the other children. On fight-related role-play, the future educators only talk about boys doing this and not about girls. But instead of reflecting with children on their media experiences, for example by asking them why they like this specific media content, the (future) educators evade the issue by distracting the boys from their role-playing. See this exchange in discussion with participants in third year of training:

In our day-care center there is also a boy, I do not know what he watches in television. If he is inside his movie, he does not notice anything around him. (Katharina, 25 years old)

Sarah: Yes. Yes. Exactly. In his own world.

Katharina: In his own world.

Interviewer: And how do you try to get him out of it? I think it's not so easy, or is it? To say: "Now it's over." Or does this work?

Katharina: Yeah, then we take up some board games or similar things.

Sarah: Board games, yes.

Katharina: "Come on, let's play a board game together."

Sarah: Just distracting him.

Katharina: Yes. So you turn to something else and through this he can get back into contact with the other children. Playing a board game with other children or something like this.

In a teacher interview, one teacher reports that she knows a day-care center where it is forbidden for the children even to speak about *Star Wars*. This would have been a decision of the day-care center's parents' council. The motivation for the ban was the attribution that the consumption of *Star Wars* would lead some

boys to hit other children with sticks. The preference of children for *Star Wars* is also problematized in the group discussions with the future educators.

Such a negative reaction of parents and educators, current and future, to media figures liked by children can be explained by reference to assumed media-related negative effects. That is, by the media-related habitus. One teacher in the interviews describes a “suspicion” of media on the part of the future educators: This could be seen for example in their positing a correlation between watching media violence and school shootings, which the future educators would define as moncausal. This doesn’t refer to children in the day-care center, but gives insights into their ideas about the risks posed by media. To protect the children against the risk of bad influences on their development, media content and “media heroes” would be excluded from the day-care center.

*Media Education in the Day-Care Center and Its Framing Conditions.* The participants in the study state that there are almost no action-oriented media projects like producing a video or an audio drama with children in day-care centers. A digital camera is used to document the development of the children, but the children themselves are not usually allowed to use it. On the other hand, a computer or a learning laptop is available in some institutions so that children can have their first experience with it. But in no day-care center was there an educational introduction to the use of the computer based on media-educational principles (like, for example, a “computer driving license”). Some day-care centers offer parents’ evenings about children’s usage of media. The teachers and the future educators see different reasons why media education does not exist—more or less—in the educational work of the day-care centers. In group discussion with participants in third year of training, they noted:

Older educators would not be able to handle the media device and some future educators do not feel able to deal with new media, e.g. developing a ‘Power Point’-presentation:

Kira, 24 years: So I ask myself if the educators can keep up. Sometimes I don’t keep up or we don’t keep up.

Friederike, 37 years: One has to keep learning.

Kira, 24 years: Yes. But at the moment, we’re not keeping up.”

Pinar, 22 years: Yes. [...]

Kira: We are in our early twenties, all of us. [...] But some of the educators are, my supervisor is 50 years old and it is difficult for her even to handle a digital camera and then I have to do the printing-out of the photos [...]. It is very difficult for them to do something like this, even to transfer the photos from the SD card to the laptop. And some of them just can’t do it.

Furthermore, the (future) educators often have a specific educational focus like promoting the social development of children (professional habitus). Besides this, the teachers express the rejection of the use of media by reference to the educators who are already in the job. Unlike media education, other activities such as handicrafts and painting would be familiar, common practice, so the prospect of doing media education seems less easy. Both future educators and teachers say that there are only limited time and staff resources to devote to doing new activities like media education:

Katharina: On Tuesdays and Wednesdays someone comes to do language training. On Tuesdays, there is a granny who reads the children a book. [...] Yes. Thus, we just have Thursdays and Fridays. On Thursday morning, we have a team meeting every two weeks, this can last until half

past eight. Yes, the parents can bring their child in up to nine o' clock and all the kids are only there from nine to twelve. And at eleven o'clock we start to tidy up for sitting in a circle.

Sarah: So, there is hardly

Katharina: Yes. There is hardly any time [to do a media-educational project].

This particular group perceives so many structural problems regarding their working context that doing media-educational projects in day-care centers seems hardly possible. As well as the problem of limited time and human resources, there would be a scarcity of the required materials. It would also be difficult to plan educational projects because the periods of time the children are actually in the day-care center differ between children (25, 35 or 45 hours a week). Furthermore, it would be difficult to plan a media-educational project because the youngest children could not take part.

So the future educators feel they are operating at full capacity even without doing media education. The law "Kinderbildungsgesetz" (KiBiz) which applies to North Rhine-Westphalia (cf. MGEPA NRW 2011), stipulates that the (future) educators must document the development of the children adequately and promote the language skills of the children.

Furthermore, both future and existing educators anticipate the expectations of parents. For example, one participant in her third year explains that there is not enough staff to devote a day to going into the forest with the children although the focus of the day-care center is to promote the motor development of the children and the parents would appreciate this day. As a result, media education competes with other educational targets because of the lack of time and staff.

*Media Education as Content of Educator Training.* The educators' professional development training in North Rhine-Westphalia takes place in particular schools for Social Studies. The media-educational contents belong to the segment "language/media." All of the teachers included in the sample say that there are two hours a week of language/media lessons. But in some schools the lessons in the first year only focus on children's literature (e.g., how to discuss picture books with children) and they do not look at electronic media until the second year. Depending on the school there are differences in how much time is allocated to the topic of electronic media. Because there are no fixed contents for the lessons in language/media, the teaching contents differ between the schools.

All the teachers in the sample start their classes by reflecting with the trainees on their media-related biography (Which media have you used as a child?) and comparing this with the more mediatized childhood of today. A principal aim of the teachers is to illustrate the relevance of doing media education in the day-care center. The teachers choose different foci in their attempts to promote a critical perception of media in the future educators. For some the principal aim is to promote a broad critical capacity vis-à-vis the media (e.g., regarding commercialization; manipulation/advertisement; social network sites and the risk of losing privacy). In contrast, others have the future educators analyze children's media contents by asking the question: "Do they have 'educational value?'" The trainees also plan media-educational projects and do role-playing of a parent's evening on the topic of media and produce media content (e.g., video, photo love story, audio drama). But all of these projects only happen in the professional development school, so the future educators do not gain media-educational experience in their work with children. The trainees can get into media-educational projects during their internships or their professional training, but the interviews and group discussions show that most of them choose to do other, more traditional, educational projects like promoting the children's concentration skills.

### **Model of the Main Parameters of Media Educational Practices**

Putting together the analysis of the group discussions and the interviews and the current state of theory and research, a model of the main parameters can be derived, which can influence whether or not future

educators do media education in day-care centers. On the one hand, there are conditions relating to the individual future educator (dimension 1) and on the other hand there are the framing working conditions in which the future educator finds herself or himself (dimension 2). These two explanatory dimensions are subdivided into two sub dimensions (see figure 3). The conditions on the part of the future educator are the whole habitus of the future educator (sub dimension 1a) and the media-related conditions which are related to the future educator (sub dimension 1b).

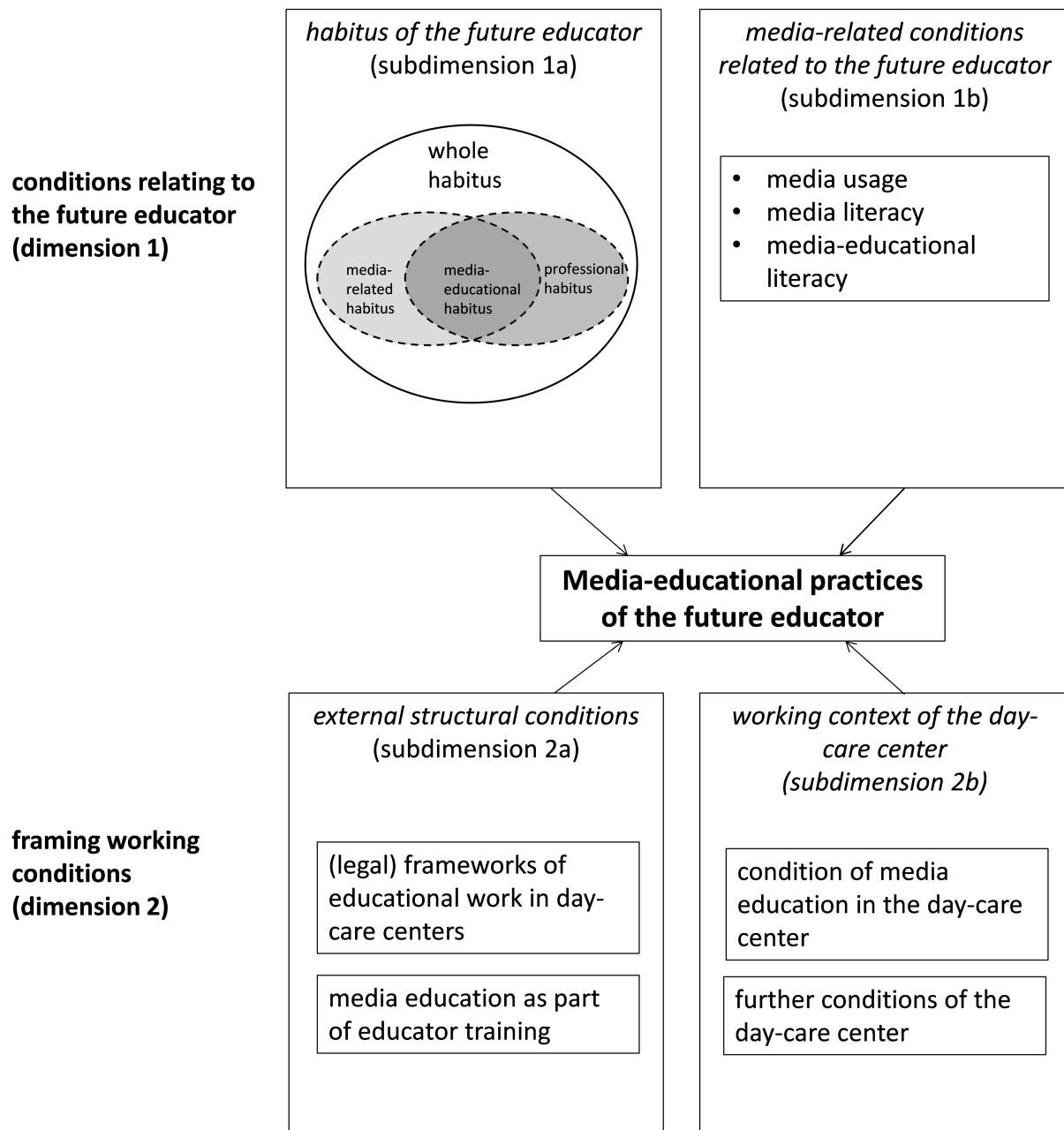


Figure 3: model of the main parameters of media-educational practices of future educators (source: own research)

The habitus of the future educator leads to ideas, attributions and practices. Thus, it also leads to ideas, attributions and practices concerning media education in day-care centers. The whole habitus can be said to

contain, among other elements, the media-related, the professional and the media- educational habitus. The media-educational habitus is the overlap of the media-related and the professional habitus.

The media-related conditions on the part of the future educators consist of their media-literacy, e.g., regarding media usage and media production (cf. Baacke 1997) (because their competence in handling a media device influences whether or not it is used in the day-care center's educational work), their own media usage (which is strongly influenced by the media-related habitus) and their media-educational literacy, which is accumulated during educator training. Media-educational literacy comprises knowledge about media- educational activities and the capacity to implement those activities. A basic condition for doing media education on part of the future educators is that they trust their media-educational literacy.

The framing working conditions (dimension 2) can be divided into the external structural conditions of the work as a day-care center educator (sub dimension 2a) and the working context of the day-care center (sub dimension 2b). The external structural conditions include the (legal) frameworks of educational work in day- care centers like the "Bildungspläne" and the "Kinderbildungsgesetz" and media education as part of educator training. In regard to educator training it is significant how much time resources are available and which issues the students work on. For example, the analysis of the interviews and group discussions shows that media- educational practices with children in day-care centers are not integrated into educator training.

The working context of the day-care center consists of the condition of media education in the day-care center and further conditions such as time and human resources, key aspects of the educational work of the day- care center and the availability of media devices. The interviews and group discussions show that media education has only a low or no significance in the day-care centers regarded in the study. Consequently, there are no media-educational role models for the future educators to follow. All future educators perceive limitations of time and human resources in their daily work.

## Conclusion

Recent studies in Germany reveal that both media education and digital media like the computer are seldom seen in the educational work of day-care centers. The most important reasons for this are negative cognitions on part of the educators: They expect digital media to have negative effects on the children and they ascribe a greater importance to the other tasks of day-care center than to media education and media use. In addition, there are a number of conditions like a lack of time and human resources and a lack of media- educational literacy on the part of the educators, all of which work against the incorporation of the topic in the work of the day-care centers.

The present study examined in detailed the attitudes about media education of a group of future educators who are still in training. One can conclude, with regard to the media-related and the media- educational habitus of the future educators in this sample, that there is a consensus among them that electronic media have an important role—often too important—in children's daily lives. Two different media-educational habitus have been reconstructed by using comparative analysis as part of the documentary method: on the one hand the belief that the day-care center should be a shelter against bad media like television and computer; and on the other, the attitude that doing media education and using electronic media are important tasks for the day- care center because of the mediatization and digitalization of society. Thus, one substantial finding is that although the future educators are young and media play an important role in their daily lives, they share the negative attitudes of the practicing educators towards the educational use of digital media like a computer. On the rejection of digital media, a parallel can be drawn between day-care centers and schools. Since the mid- 1990s computers and the Internet have been brought into the work of schools in Germany by an initiative called "Schulen ans Netz e.V." Some schoolteachers strongly disagreed, but the computer and the internet as well as whiteboards are now available in schools. In contrast to day-care center educators, many schoolteachers see the distribution of knowledge about media devices as their responsibility (cf. Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2015). The day-care center is today one of the last educational settings into whose work the electronic media

have entered hardly at all. It seems possible that we will see a similar process of the introduction of electronic media into day-care centers as happened in schools. At least the political decisions on the inclusion of media in the Bildungspläne (like in North Rhine-Westphalia) demonstrate that media education is considered to be an important part of the work of day-care centers.

Another substantial finding of the study is that even those future educators who are generally willing to do media education in the day-care center do not currently do media-educational projects and do not stimulate their colleagues to do so. Thus, a habitus which favors doing media education does not automatically lead to media-educational practices. The analysis indicates various parameters in the training of the educators which might lead to an increase in the institutions' media-educational efforts. The way in which the media-educational contents of courses are introduced in teacher training seems highly significant. When the research was carried out, the subject of language/media was taught for two hours a week. Because of the separation between teaching language in the first year of training and media in the second year and because of exams, internships and excursions in the second year of training, there is little time for teachers to do action-oriented media projects with the trainees. Furthermore, media-educational practices with children in day-care centers are not prescribed by the curriculum of the schools of social studies attended by trainees in the sample. In addition to this, in some schools it is not possible to do a media-educational project lasting several weeks in a day-care center. Although an educational project is nominally included in the training guidelines, in some schools the trainees only design the project and discuss it in school and do not put it into practice in the day-care center. Moreover, in some schools working on an educational project is limited on specific learning segments and media education is not among them. Thus educator training does not offer enough opportunities for the future educators to gain media-educational experience. But the analysis of the group discussions shows that students' willingness to do media education and their trust in their own media-educational literacy are increased by undergoing their own media-educational experiences if these are perceived as positive. Thus it is necessary to establish co-operative relationships between the schools for social studies and the day-care centers so that the future educators can gain a wider range of experiences. This could have the desirable effect that the future educators would better understand the relevance of media education for their educational work and the benefits it can offer.

Since 2014 - 2015, there has been a revision of the educator training to orient it more towards competences which are needed in the job. In this context, language/media is not defined as a separate learning segment, but as one of the ten learning segments mentioned in the Bildungsplan of North Rhine-Westphalia. Furthermore, the promotion of media literacy is defined as a cross-sectional task of the training (cf. MSW NRW 2013). So the Schools for Social Studies have to modify their lessons. One of the teachers in the sample stated that, because of this, language/media would no longer be a separate subject in the curriculum of his school. Such a change can offer opportunities for bringing media education into the training, but in view of the author, the risk is still strong that media education will play a smaller role in future training programs.

In addition to the classical training of educators in the form of dual training (where the trainee alternates time in School with time on the job), several degree programs of early childhood education have been developed in recent years at universities and universities of applied sciences. The German debate about early childhood education is linked with the aspiration on the part of the institutions for a higher educational quality through the professionalization of the training of educators (cf. Nentwig-Gesemann 2013; Helm 2010). It does not seem realistic to expect that media education will be deemed more important in day-care centers as a result of this more academic type of training, for several reasons. On the one hand, there are only university places for a small number of future educators so that both types of training will co-exist for a long time (cf. Blossfeld et al. 2012, 59). Furthermore, media education is not always included in the curriculum of the new degree programs. Also, some degree programs allocate less time than the classical training to internships in educational institutions, so that future educators have less time in which to gain experience of media education.

Turning to the conditions prevailing in the day-care centers, the future educators need media-educational role models. If media education is to be given a role in the educational work of day-care centers, further training is needed (cf. National Association for the Education of Young Children & Fred Rogers Center for Early

Learning and Children's media at Saint Vincent College 2012). One avenue to be recommended is in-house training courses in the day-care centers in which the idea of media education is introduced to all the staff and they can explore its possibilities, including action-oriented projects, with the assistance of a trainer. A scientific evaluation of a media education in-house training in twelve day-care centers in North Rhine-Westphalia showed that this type of professional development can be successful. There were positive impacts on the educators' understanding of and motivation towards media education, and their faith in their own media and media-educational literacy increased (cf. Friedrichs and Meister 2014). Currently in Germany many small media-educational projects exist, but they close down at the end of the funding period. An evaluation of these projects is required in order to establish what are the factors that might favor success in future projects. To anchor the idea and the praxis of media-education in the institutions, a nationwide media-educational initiative would be desirable.

In conclusion, the remaining research gaps and possibilities are as follows: the next stage after this research study should be a design of a quantitative study; a questionnaire survey with future educators could provide further insights into the different styles of media-educational habitus and the interactions between media-related, professional and media-educational habitus; in addition to this, participatory observations, looking at the media-educational practices of (future) educators in day-care centers, would give us a more detailed picture of the implementation of media education in the institution, (for example, with regard to particular uses of media in combination with other learning tasks, like using the PC to promote language skills. These results could contribute usefully to the planning of further media-educational initiatives.

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